

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

January 12, 2018

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President
United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Subject: Support of Governor Jerry Brown's Request for Reconsideration for Individual Assistance to Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties

Dear President Trump:

We write to support the State of California's appeal of the denial of Individual Assistance to Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. Enclosed is a copy of the State's appeal, which includes additional supporting documentation regarding the deadly mudslides that have claimed the lives of at least 17 individuals in Santa Barbara County.

We are grateful for the federal support afforded in the wake of this disaster to California thus far. However, we urge this Administration to move expeditiously to approve California's request for Individual Assistance programs. Time is of the essence. Federal support is necessary to save lives, protect public health and safety, and defend property from further damage.

People in our communities have lost everything, from their homes to businesses. The Thomas Fire started on Monday, December 4, 2017 off the Highway 150 and Highway 126 in Ventura County and spread to Santa Barbara County. It burned more than 280,000 acres, destroyed 1063 structures, and damaged another 280 structures. The fire also tragically claimed 2 lives. While the fire is 92 percent contained, its effects have caused devastation throughout California's Central Coast.

On December 21, 2017, Governor Brown made a request for a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration with Individual and Public Assistance for the state. We were pleased that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approved California's request for a Major Disaster Declaration on January 2, 2018, and subsequently amended the declaration on January 10, 2018 to also include flooding, mudflows, and debris flows directly related to the wildfires. However, we remain disappointed that the Administration denied California's request for Individual Assistance. We believe more federal support is necessary for the families and businesses impacted by the fires.

Furthermore, on January 8, 2018, heavy rain triggered mudslides and flooding in Santa Barbara, California, killing at least 17 people. At least 8 people are still missing. Crews have completed a primary search of 75 percent of the debris field, and more than 500 first responders and 10 dogs continue to look for victims. In Santa Barbara alone, there are at least 250 homes destroyed due to the mudslides. Yet, the full extent of the damage is still unknown.

Individual Assistance Programs would provide relief, like housing assistance, disaster unemployment assistance and crisis counseling, to individuals whose homes were destroyed in this disaster.

Again, we strongly support the State of California's request for Individual Assistance. We stand ready to provide any support needed to expeditiously approve this request and provide the necessary resources to the impacted communities.

Sincerely,



SALUD O. CARBAJAL
Member of Congress



JULIA BROWNLEY
Member of Congress